

Minutes of DAAC Meeting

Call to Order

Co-Chair Seren Derin called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Attendance

DAAC members present were Seren Derin, Reginald Andrade, Bernadette Hait, Jim MacRostie, Joan Rising and Joe Tringali

Absent was Co-Chair Madeline Peters

Others present were; Brian Corriveau, Quenneville Roofing for Village Park Apartments; Gerry Weiss, Select Board liaison; Carolyn Holstein, DAAC staff liaison; and members of the public Dana Goddard, Jane Gamache and Marina Carroll

Minutes

Minutes of February 11th and March 10th were reviewed. Ms. Derin made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Hait seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to accept the DAAC minutes of February 11th and March 10th.

A suggestion was made to put the minutes of the DAAC meetings on the Town website. The committee was unanimous in wanting their minutes to be available to the public.

Update on Committee Membership

Joan Rising was welcomed as the newest committee member. Jim MacRostie, who had been inactive, was welcomed back to the committee.

The DAAC membership is now full, at seven (7) members. There was discussion of increasing the committee membership, but the committee "charge" would have to be changed by the Select Board if membership were to be increased.

Village Park Accessible Unit

Brian Corriveau from Quenneville Roofing presented plans for converting a Village Park apartment to a universally accessible dwelling. He said that Quenneville Roofing has been contracted by the new owners of Village Park (Related Affordable LP, from New York City, NY) to convert one of the units to a fully accessible one.

Mass Housing requires 5% of apartment complexes to be handicapped accessible, and to date, none of the 200 Village Park units are fully accessible. Mr. Corriveau said that eventually the owner will convert ten two-bedroom units. The conversions will progress as tenants leave and vacancies occur. The process could take up to five (5) years.

The proposed construction will convert the first floor of a two-unit building to an accessible unit, and create a second floor apartment. The indoor stairway to the second floor, the bedrooms and bath on the second floor will be kept, and a new kitchen and living room will be created on the second floor;

Exterior changes will include:

- 1) Two existing decks in the back of the building will be replaced with a new accessible deck with a French door, and a new casement window that will be above the kitchen sink in the new accessible apartment;
- 2) A new ramp and sidewalk will be added in the back of the accessible apartment (north side of the building) next to Village Park Road;
- 3) A change in the grade on the lawn next to the new ramp will be a one foot decline for 20

- feet of sidewalk; the ramp will have a grade of one foot height change to 12 feet of ramp;
- 4) The addition of a second means of egress for the second floor apartment, a covered exterior stairwell and door.

In terms of interior changes, the committee focused their attention mainly on the bathroom and kitchen. For the bath, the DAAC recommended a roll-in shower, but if not, more vertical grab bars and a transfer area from wheelchair to tub. For the kitchen, the counter heights met the code at 34", the sliding windows were easy to open, the refrigerator should be side-by-side (or one with the freezer in the bottom), a wall-hung oven, roll-under stove top and smoke detectors visible as well as audible.

Mr. MacRostie said that doorways can be made wider by hanging the doors with offset hinges.

Mr. Tringali said that a transition plan should be put in place on paper so that the conversions to accessible units will in fact be scheduled and accomplished. Plans to convert the Village Park apartments have been discussed since the early 1980's, so the conversion to 10 fully accessible units is way overdue.

Ms. Carroll said that there is an additional need for 2% of the units to be converted for those with sensory impairments. The changes are not expensive – blinking lights for telephones and doorbells, smoke detectors visible and audible, for example.

The DAAC unanimously agreed to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals the conversion of the Village Park apartment to a fully accessible unit, with the above recommendations. They asked staff liaison Ms. Holstein to write such a letter to the ZBA prior to their meeting on April 10, 2008.

Other Access Issues

1. Ms. Rising talked about the need for special HP placards for Amherst College. Since College architects are coming at the DAAC next meeting, this issue will be fully discussed with them at that time.
2. Ms. Derin told about her difficulties voting at Munson Library, Precinct 8. The curb-cuts are unsafe, and there is no place to park a van. She was forced to park in the South Church parking lot, and go onto South East Street in order to find a curb cut. The curb cut in front of the library is very bad, she said.
3. Pam Ledoux has had a problem crossing at the intersection of Route 9 and South Pleasant Street. Mr. Weiss said that he would follow up on this.
4. A warrant article for this Spring Town Meeting has been submitted asking that all new housing have an accessible entrance. The article will most likely be dismissed because Attorney General's office warned that such ordinances not covered in the State Building Code in Massachusetts are not legal.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. The next meeting will be April 22nd to discuss Amherst College dormitory renovations and campus-wide issues.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Holstein, staff liaison